

Baltimore health department gets \$150,000 grant to expand healthy local stores program



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The Baltimore City Health Department has received a \$150,000 grant to work with the owners of local “corner stores” to stock and sell healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grain foods and low-fat milk.

The two-year grant from the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission will be used to add 40 stores to the Baltimarket Healthy Stores Program, which now has 17 retailers participating. The health department will also hire 40 young people to serve as nutrition educators and supply the stores with advertising materials to promote the program. The program was started in 2014 with the goal of providing healthy food options to those living in so-called food deserts, or places with few traditional grocery stores.

One in four Baltimore residents live in an area identified as a food desert, according to a 2015 report on the city's food environment.

“All of our residents deserve to be healthy,” said Baltimore City Health Commissioner Dr. Leana S. Wen. “This is an issue of health and justice, and the funding to increase healthy options in corner stores will move us closer to that goal.”

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